



THOMAS L. GARTHWAITE, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
313 N. Figueroa, Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 240-8101

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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November 9, 2005

Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION OF PAYMENT FOR SMOKING CESSATION AIDS
PRESCRIBED TO PATIENTS WHO HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCE AND
ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE SMOKING CESSATION PROGRAM
(ALL DISTRICTS) (3 VOTES)**

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

Approve the request for exemption of payment for smoking cessation aids prescribed to patients in the smoking cessation program who have no alternative funding source up to a maximum obligation of \$200,000 per fiscal year.

PURPOSE OF THE RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/JUSTIFICATION:

Approval of this recommended action allows the Department of Health Services (DHS) to waive the cost of smoking cessation pharmacological aids prescribed to patients who are participating in the DHS smoking cessation program and who have no alternative funding source which will relieve the financial barrier for patients who want to quit smoking.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

The cost for nicotine replacement therapy during Fiscal Year (FY) 2004-05 was approximately \$13,000. The cost for the non-nicotine aid (Wellbutrin™) in FY 04-05 was \$75,000. With the implementation of the DHS department-wide smoking cessation initiative, the number of patients is expected to rise. Assuming that the number of patients who wish

to quit smoking doubles this fiscal year, the financial impact may be up to \$200,000 for both nicotine replacement and non-nicotine aids. The estimated cost for the FY 05-06 is \$200,000. Funding is included in the FY 05-06 final budget and will be included in future fiscal years.

Funding for this program will be absorbed within the existing DHS operating budget. Additionally, the Department of Health Services Quality Improvement Committee (DHSQIC) is applying for a grant to cover the cost of the Wellbutrin™ in the future.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS

DHSQIC is implementing a department-wide smoking cessation initiative to coincide with the American Cancer Society's (ACS) Great American Smokeout® event. The DHS initiative will begin November 17, 2005, the same day as the ACS event, but will continue throughout the year. DHS facilities are joining with Los Angeles County Tobacco Control and Prevention Program and the California Smokers' Helpline to provide a comprehensive program that includes provider training, patient counseling, and pharmacological aids to help patients quit.

Over one million residents of Los Angeles County smoke. Smoking is the leading preventable cause of death. The 2005 DHS Patient Assessment Survey found that 17% of DHS primary care patients smoke daily, with an additional 7% reporting that they smoke some days. The economic cost of smoking in Los Angeles County is estimated to be \$4.3 billion annually. Smoking cessation intervention is the single most effective step healthcare providers can take to lengthen and improve patients' lives.

Nicotine is the drug in cigarettes that forms addiction; nicotine-replacement products help relieve withdrawal symptoms. Studies have shown that nicotine replacement therapy doubles the long-term quit rates compared to placebos. Additional non-nicotine aids such as bupropion (Wellbutrin™) also help reduce nicotine withdrawal symptoms and the urge to smoke; their use has demonstrated an increase in long-term quit rates compared to placebos. Pharmacological aids are not funded unless patients are covered by Medi-Cal or other third party insurance; 27% of the DHS patients are covered by a third party, the others would be responsible for the cost of therapy. For a typical patient, the cost of therapy is estimated between \$120 and \$300. This may present a financial burden to these patients. The proposed exemption will eliminate financial barriers to patients enrolled in the smoking cessation program that are not eligible for reimbursement and encourage them to quit smoking.

CONTRACTING PROCESS:

None

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS):

The long term health effects of smoking cessation will reduce healthcare costs for chronic diseases.

Each Supervisor
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Upon approval, the Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors is requested to return three adopted copies of this letter to DHS.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Thomas L. Garthwaite", written over a horizontal line.

Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer

TLG:cet

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

SUMMARY OF AGREEMENT

1. TYPE OF SERVICE:

This will allow patients without third party funding to receive nicotine replacement pharmacological therapy without cost.

2. AGENCY ADDRESS AND CONTACT PERSON

Department of Health Services
313 N. Figueroa St. Room 703
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Contact Person: Laura Sarff, RN
Phone: 213-240-8283
Facsimile: 213-482-3895

3. TERM OF AGREEMENT:

Effective upon Board approval

4. FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The estimated cost for Fiscal Year (FY) 2005-06 is \$200,000. Funding is included in the FY 2005-06 Final Budget, and will be included in future fiscal years.

5. GEOGRAPHICAL AREA TO BE SERVED:

All Districts.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PROGRAM MONITORING AND EVALUATION:

Laura Sarff, Director, Quality Improvement and Patient Safety Program

7. APPROVALS:

Quality Improvement and
Patient Safety Program:

Laura Sarff, Director

Clinical Affairs & Affiliations:

Bruce Chernof, M.D..Sr Medical Director

County Counsel:

Rich Mason